



Michigan National Organization for Women

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March 17, 2010

TO: Members of the House Families and Children's Services Committee:

RE: **HB 4015 of 2009**

Greetings:

The Michigan National Organization for Women urges the Committee to vote NO on referring HB 4015 for passage by the House.

This bill, if adopted and signed into law, would expose parents who gave up their children for adoption from 1945 until 1980 under their government's promise of confidentiality, to potential involuntary contact from the children.

This bill would change the default from voluntary privacy to involuntary disclosure unless the birth parent takes affirmative action to file a form prohibiting release of the identifying information. There is no provision for notification of the birth parent to ask if they permit their identity to be released. There is no requirement to use an intermediary and no regulation of the manner in which an involuntary first contact would occur.

There are many reasons birth mothers gave up their babies for adoption and many reasons why they might not want to ever reveal their identity. They should continue to have a choice about revealing their identity. The demands of vocal adoptees should not be granted over the promise made to these mothers that their identity would be preserved unless they wanted to reveal it. Many birth mothers have never told anyone, including their current family, that they have given up a child for adoption. An involuntary and surprise contact with a child given up for adoption because of rape or incest could very well cause yet a second trauma to the birth mother.

Elimination of confidentiality would not be good public policy. The current system for voluntary disclosure using an intermediary balances competing interests of birth parents and adopted children. The legislature should not break the promise it made to birth parents.

Michigan NOW urges you to vote NO on this bill.

Sincerely,

Mary Pollock
Legislative Vice President

NOW's purpose is to take action to bring women into full participation in the mainstream of American society now, exercising all privileges and responsibilities thereof in truly equal partnership with men.